1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19

dried armadillo skin is scraped with a large bean-like seed; in the same manner as I have seen the negroes of the West Indies scrape a roughened calabash with a bone. The dancers clasp each other over the shoulder, around the waist, or hook arms; both sexes taking part in the dancing, but not in the singing or drumming, these being the especial province of the men. The steps are usually about three forward and to one side, and then the same number backward. When arranged in a circle, this carries them gradually around the musicians. When in a straight line, they keep on the same spot. The songs are a sort of recitative, sometimes impromptu, sometimes of fixed words; the chorus a sort of "fol-de-rol," a series of meaningless syllables. These songs for dancing must not, however, be confounded with the sacred songs of the priests, of which I shall have occasion to make fuller mention in the proper place.

The dances are kept up nearly all, and sometimes all night at the funeral feast; the participants retiring from time to time and sleeping an hour or two when exhausted, and returning with renewed vigor to chicha drinking, eating, and dancing. It is particularly on these occasions, when the older people are too drunk, or too busy to keep strict watch, that the younger folks manage to evade their vigilance and ——. These eminently practical courtships almost invariably precede the asking of the father's consent by the would-be bridegroom.

After more than two weeks of this license and debauchery, during which three cows, about a dozen pigs, hundreds of bunches of plantains, several quintals of rice, and hundreds of gallons of chicha had been devoured, the *bi-ka-kra* or steward announced that the commissary had given out and the riot must come to an end. I was notified according to previous agreement and went at the time appointed. As distinguished guests, our party of four were shown to the best hammocks, where we were seated, and in a few minutes served with cups of chocolate. In a little while, all of the priests seated themselves on low benches, the leader in the middle. The lay chorus singers were ranged in a double line facing each other and below the priests. The fire was carefully carried from its place under the corpse and piled almost between the feet of the principal priest. All drank chocolate and the priests sounded their rattles. The leader began a low dirge-like song in the sacred jargon, which I was told described in detail the journey of the defunct to the other world. It told of the dangerous rivers he had to cross, where alligators lay in wait to devour him; of the great serpents who disputed his path; of the high hills he had to climb with weary steps; of the fearful precipices he must scale; of the beautiful birds with sweet songs, compared with which even the flute-like *silguero* was as a crow; of the gorgeous butterflies that lightened up the path like flying flowers, and finally of his safe arrival at the country of the great *Si-bu*, where he would have nothing to do but eat, drink, sleep, and enjoy himself.

The song was divided into stanzas, and the priests all followed the lead of their chief, the words being a series of set phrases, but in a language

1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
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764 The final disposal of the remains is a matter of great care. The whole of the tribe goes to the district of Bri-bri for this purpose. The receptacle is a square pit, about four feet deep and ten feet square. This is paved on the bottom with stones, and is roofed over from the weather, by a series of heavy hewn slabs of a very durable wood, open on the front and ends, and sloping to the ground at the back. Each family possesses one of these pits and here, after the funeral feast, the bundle of bones is carried and deposited. After the rest, the remains of Santiago were carried to the "royal" pit and deposited without further ceremony.

The Cabecars, according to Mr. Lyon, have about the same ceremony, but their pits are mere holes, not paved, and covered by planks laid on the ground level.

The Tiribis have a death feast, but it differs in some respects from the others. The body is buried immediately after death, but no longer with the property of the deceased, and, of course, the defunct is not present at his final feast, as with the Bri-bris.

766 Mr. Lyon, to whom I owe much of the information in the present memoir, has described to me one circumstance, in connection with these death feasts, that I have not witnessed. The warriors among the Bribris, who fought in the war with the Tiribis were honored with a little different ceremonial. They are now all gone, and the ceremony is extinct. At the death feast, a person entered, clad in a long gown, wig, and mask. The gown and wig were made of mastate, or bark cloth, covered with "old man's beard" moss, sewed all over it, making a shaggy and nearly shapeless mass. The mask was made of half a "tree calabash," [532] properly fixed up with a wax nose, &c. A copy of this entire dress was made for me by an old Indian, and is now in the Smithsonian museum. The person thus accoutred, took part in the dance, made free with the women and scared the children without let or hindrance. Mothers with young children took them to him and placed them for a moment on his shoulder, "to prevent the evil spirit from doing them harm." Neither Lyon nor the Indians could give me a very clear account of what spirit, whether good or evil, this represented. But the people seemed to regard him as rather of the malevolent sort; to be classed under the general head of "*Bi*" or Devil. Doubtless this, at one time had a distinct meaning, now lost.

771 No strictly religious belief can be said to exist among these Indians, in the sense that it is usually understood among us. They have, however, a series of ideas or beliefs which affect their daily lives and are never lost sight of. In connection with the funeral feast, described above, I have referred to their idea of a future state.

775 During the year that the body lies in the woods, the disembodied spirit prowls around, living on wild fruits, of which the wild cacao is the only one of which I know the name, although others were also pointed out to me. At the end of that time, when the funeral fire is kindled, the spirit is thus attracted to the feast, whence it departs on its final journey.

1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19

775 When I asked an Indian where it went, he responded, to the country of *Si-bu'*, and in reply to the question; where is that? he pointed unhesitatingly to the zenith. On inquiring where the road was, he told me it was invisible to the eyes of the living, but that the spirit (*wig'bru*) could see it.

In the other world there are no troubles, no cares. There is plenty to eat and to drink, of those things that the Indian loves most here. Plantains and corn are never wanting; meat and chicha are always to be had; and chocolate, the luxury, *par excellence* of the Costa Rican Indian never runs out, or becomes scarce as, alas too often, it does in Talamanca. He needs all his arms and implements, but it does not seem that he will be obliged to work. These little discrepancies, the wisest *Tsu-gur* does not attempt to explain. After death, the soul remains wandering about near the corpse until the burial feast. Then, by means of the songs of the *Tsu-gurs* or priests, it makes its journey to the "promised land."

789 Their superstitions are however, somewhat more definite and tangible since they affect their every day actions. There are two classes of uncleanness, *nya* and *bu-ku-ru'*. Anything that is essentially filthy, or that was connected with the death of a person is "*nya*," anything unclean in the Hebraic or Hindu sense is *bu-ku-ru'*. But *bu-ku-ru'* is even more powerful than it is supposed to be by the Orientals. It suffices not only [753] to make one sick, but even kills. In a party where *bu-ku-ru'* is excited, it does not affect all alike, but only attacks the weakest. *Bu-ku-ru'* emanates in a variety of ways; arms, utensils, even houses become affected by it after long disuse and before they can be used again must be purified. In the case of portable objects left undisturbed for a long time, the custom is to beat them with a stick before touching them. I have seen a woman take a long walking stick and beat a basket hanging from the roof of a house by a cord. On asking what that was for, I was told that the basket contained her treasures, that she would probably want to take something out the next day and that she was driving off the *bu-ku-ru'*. A house long unused must be swept and then the person who is purifying it must take a stick and beat not only the movable objects, but the beds, posts, and in short, every accessible part of the interior. The next day it is fit for occupation. A place not visited for a long time or reached for the first time, is *bu-ku-ru'*. On our return from the ascent of Pico Blanco, nearly all the party suffered from little calenturas, the result of extraordinary exposure to wet and cold and of want of food. The Indians said that the peak was especially *bu-ku-ru'*, since nobody had ever been on it before. Even we foreigners were sick from it, and had any of them gone to the summit, they would have surely died. On one occasion, while buying some implements, I pulled down off a rack, two or three "blow guns?" that, from the dust on them, must have lain there undisturbed for weeks, perhaps months. As I reached out my hand, I heard the warning cry of "*bu-ku-ru'*" from all around; laughingly disregarding it, and telling them that *bu-ku-ru'* couldn't hurt us, I began examining them.

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

red vegetable juice, in figures two to four inches long. The devices vary according to the cause of the death of the individual; whether it be from fever or other disease, old age, snake bite." 764

The bones were kept in the house on a rack of cane during the ceremony for two weeks or more. The final rites consisted of a ritualistic chant, by the shaman, describing the journey of the deceased to the other world, the dangerous rivers he had to cross, beset by alligators, by great serpents which lay in his path, and by fearful precipices. But the journey was not to be altogether dreadful, for beautiful birds, butterflies, and flowers were to be encountered, the song closing with a description of final arrival of the departed and reception in the Hereafter, where he would have nothing to do but eat, drink, sleep, and enjoy himself in the realm of the god *Sibú*. 764 795

The fire was then extinguished, and the skeleton ceremonially conducted to its final resting place, amid a partial destruction of the property of the deceased, after which the bones were taken to the death house. 764

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Bribri
Cabecar

764 are two ceremonies connected with death. The first takes place when the individual dies, and
[765] the second and most important is held about a year later and can be called a bone funeral as well as burial. During each there is a feast at which the remains of the deceased are present. It must be remembered that the basis
764 of society among the Talamancans is the matri-
614 lineal clan. The laws governing such an organization require strict adherence to one's blood group even after death. Each clan, therefore, has its own communal grave called in both languages a *pų* (*see* Funeral and Bone
764 Burial). According to the Bribri, the custom of a communal grave was started by the Singers (*see* The Singers) who were also responsible for the respect given the clan. They say that the *pų* are only about 200 years old. Among the Cabécar, they are not stone lined at the bottom and are covered by rough planks on top. The Bribri have a more elaborate design which includes a stone floor and a slanting wood covering which is left open at the front. It would be unpleasant to say the least to open a communal grave each time a member of the clan died. It would be worse when epidemics prevailed. The only solution then, if the society demands segregation on the basis of maternal blood, is to bury a person when there is no longer a trace of odoriferous material present, or, in other words, to bury clean bones. This is why the first step after death is to wrap the body in
• [775] *bijagua* leaves, with, of course, the proper articles for the comfort of the spirit, and to place the package in the woods where it is well protected by briars and cut branches
765 from rapine birds and beasts. After a year, when all the flesh has disappeared, the leaf bundle is opened and rearranged by the proper authorities and a package of bones wrapped in cloth is deposited for permanent rest in the clan grave where there is no risk of sin against the existing social order (*see* Social Organization).

764 On the Pacific slope, where the school has
[177] undertaken an educational program to in-
[871] corporate the Talamancans into the Costa Rican republic, cemeteries, sanctioned by the Ministry of Public Health and blessed by the Roman Catholic priest, have been started. A description of a Pacific burial will be given

767 or a possum. There is a well-regulated course which one must adhere to before one can achieve this position. The fee for this is paid [465] to the teacher (who is, of course, a recognized Burier) in foodstuffs, such as pigs, *bavas* of yucas, etc. Plus the study, there are twenty- [262] two days of rigid diet when meat, salt, and chocolate cannot be used. After this, the aspirant must act as assistant five times, four of [785] which demand fasting, and for two days of which he cannot use his hands to eat nor to touch his face. The training of the novice begins at four o'clock in the morning when he must bathe with his teacher who is the only person he is allowed to see. He cannot touch another man or woman and must live during [343] this period in a hut of banana leaves which he himself must build. The teacher likewise is not allowed to touch others, and must hand the food to his pupil from afar. This in itself must be in *bijagua* leaves and cannot have contact 787 with the human hand. One of the tests is for 767 the novice to go with the teacher at three o'clock in the morning and cut a staff. Both put a string around one wrist and around each staff. Then the master sticks his pole in the ground and attaches the string to a nearby tree. The aspirant copies this act. If both cuttings grow, it is a sign that the novice will live long and bury many people. If one dies, it is taken for a bad omen. A full-fledged burier must 767 follow a diet the day of and after a funeral. [262] He can eat nothing but plantain (*Dominik*) and wild herbs cooked without salt.

[554] Even the younger generation on the Pacific slope respect the Buriers. The comment of an exceptionally enlightened Bribri, for example, when questioned about the necessity of the Burier at a death was: "This is the custom, as is a law, and one has to do it whether one likes it or not." In 1956, in Salitre alone, there were six Buriers. Ujarrás had three, but could use those from Salitre if their own were not available. At Ujarrás, however, all who assist at the funeral must bathe three days later at four o'clock in the morning. They must also tap the official Burier on the head with *bijagua* leaves.

767 **The Singers.** There are no longer Singers 533 except in Chirripó. In the other regions, the medicine man, as stated before, has taken over [756] their functions. The duties of the Singers were

[775]

767 always confined to funeral ceremonies where
533 they chanted the deeds and merits of the de-
[775] ceased as well as sped the soul along on its
journey to the other world through song. The
[614] Bribri Singers came from the *stsukur* or *stu'gur* clan according to Gabb and Pittier,[105] but the elders and medicine men in 1956 claimed that they belonged to the *síbəwak*, *korrehué*, or *sinąbwak* groups. Gabb states that their office
[428] was hereditary,[106] and that they were next to the *usegLa* in importance. Pittier suggests heredity [107] and notes that they lived only by the lower Coen and had a number of assistants the highest of whom were called *ko*, and apprentices known as *sini*.[108] He adds that elaborate preparation was necessary before the title of Singer was won. This is not exactly in keeping with the idea that their position was hereditary.

[614] Cabécar Singers had to come from the following clans: *kibegrɨwák*, *síbəwak*, *bLerɨwak*, and *sənítsɨwa* (*see* The Clans and Myths: *Protectors of Clans*). Their name in this language is *səgLə*.

[198] Gabb,[109] speaking only about the Bribri, calls attention to the fact that the songs of *stsukur* were in a language which neither he nor the uninitiated could understand. As Lehmann has pointed out, however, the Bribri Singers were in reality a Cabécar group,[110] according to his spelling and that of Pittier, the *korrhué*. We use *korrehué* because this is the pronunciation given by the Bribri today. There is, nevertheless, another angle to this problem, particularly if one accepts the statement that the Bribri Singers could come from one of the three clans mentioned above. This
[198] is the use of a "sacred language" by the
[197] medicine men of both Talamancan peoples when singing and the adoption of foreign songs even by the laymen. These aspects will be discussed later under Curing and Songs, respectively.

764 The Pacific Bribri and Cabécares, in lieu
756 of Singers, have a ceremony called *setéhɨwək*
184 in Bribri which is carried out by the medicine man when someone dies (*see* First Burial).

[105] Gabb, 1875, p. 508; Pittier, 1938, p. 17.
[106] Gabb, 1875.
[107] Pittier, 1895, p. 18.
[108] Pittier, 1938, pp. 17–18. Could there be a connec-

767 764 **The Organizer of Feasts.** This position is common to both Talamancan peoples and is covered by a single title, *bikö'kra*. One has to study to achieve it.[111] The principal tasks of the Organizer of Feasts is at the death of an individual to designate the persons who must [273] plant the maize to be used for the chicha at the time of the bone funeral; to name those who are to make it; and those who have to provide chocolate, plantains, pigs, etc., for the [756] feast. On the Pacific slope, this position has also been absorbed by the medicine man.

764 **The já.** Back in the woodland, however, where authorities and visitors are scarce, the method of handling the dead adheres to former [775] usage. Things must be prepared for the soul of the deceased. This is done by those known as the *já:* three adults if an adult died, or three girls, or three boys, such as the case may be. Cotton must be placed inside the body bundle of a woman. Combs and other ornaments are carried apart with the clothes of the dead. Even if a person has a lot of clothes, all are put in the grave. If a boy dies, a miniature bow and arrow are substituted for the cotton. But when the deceased is a man, in addition to this, they place a miniature blow gun, fish hook, and digging stick in the bundle. This [768] is done in order to leave the real ones for the family's use. A net carrying bag is also placed with the dead man.

[767] **First Burial.** When death takes over, the entire retinue of officials begin their work. Of course, customs vary depending upon the [656] geographical location. Government and eccle- [797] siastical authorities have prohibited the fundamental part of the ancient rites, that is, the keeping of the dead for a year before burial. Usually, the body is left in the house for about twenty-four hours by both the Bribri and Cabécar who are located near non-indigenous villages on the Caribbean side. The personal belongings of the deceased, either in effect or symbolically, and cacao paste are placed beside the corpse which is then wrapped in *mastate* (*see* Bark Cloth) and tied with a cotton string made especially for this purpose

[767] [533] tion between *sini* and *sinqbwak?* (*See* Social Organization.)

[109] Gabb, 1875, p. 508.
[110] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 220.
[111] Pittier, 1938, p. 17.

764 (*see* Fibers). They cover the bark cloth with the leaves of white *bijagua* (*murksi*) and tie it again with the special string. Leaves of the [824] white *bijagua* are essential for the dead. They [264] are not used to wrap or serve food as is the black *bijagua* (*bikuLəkə*) because they have a faint taste and odor. After the feast the bundle is "buried" in the forest. In effect, it is covered with briar bushes and branches or is even placed in a shallow grave.

Gabb [112] gives a description of two deaths he witnessed among the Bribri in the second half of the past century.

In 1947, the writer had the opportunity to be present at a ceremony for a little girl in Cabécar, the account of which follows. When we arrived at the house, a small ceremonial fire called *hamburu* had been made and beside it the *já* had placed a gourd filled with water. As we entered, they put another gourd filled with *chilate*, a preparation of ground maize, ripe bananas, and water, on a white *bijagua* leaf by the fire as well as a cotton burr and a little raised-rim grinding stone with a pestle on top.

Some cotton without seeds was tied with *pita* to a stick. There was also a *mochila* or net carrying bag with two small gourds filled with ground cacao and ground maize, respectively 775 (fig. 11, *b*). The belief is that the soul goes below where the sun comes from. When the sun rises, the soul goes along with it to the sky but always returns below. The food set by the fire is needed for this journey.

764 The *bika'kra* or Organizer of the Feast put this food on the raised shelf where the body was lying hidden by a banana leaf screen made with a pole frame. Then he undertook the task of seeing that there was enough food for the people present.

The grieved mother, a widow, remained apart from everyone, sitting at the very edge of the house, grimly silent. As long as the dead was there, custom decreed that she could not do a thing, neither eat, except to drink chocolate, nor talk at length. She also had to be bathed with hot water by a woman after the body was removed. Meanwhile the Organizer of Feasts arranged the banquet which various women were preparing over a big fire inside the house. He also fixed the raised shelf which was rather fragile.

[112] Gabb, 1875, pp. 497–99.

764 it in between them. He tied the whole twelve times around and once down the center with the *burío*. The wailing of the mourner continued. The Burier next took a pole and laid it lengthwise down the center of the body tying the bundle to it but leaving a piece projecting at each end to serve as a handle. His helper took the fire from where it had been used to flex the leaves and added it to the
• [775] ceremonial one which had the food for the dead beside it.

At this moment, the mourner came into the house and seeing what was taking place, yelled in a frightful voice and again disappeared into the bush screaming her singsong chant. She soon returned and gazed at the body bundle which lay wrapped and tied to the stick on top of a banana leaf.

The apprentice and the Burier cleared the remaining banana leaves from the screen, the Burier alone putting them in a pile in a plantain patch adjoining the house. He then took three cockroaches and wrapped them in a small leaf placing the whole in between the
[825] leaves of the body bundle. This was supposed to rid the house of roaches for at least six months.

The apprentice took the objects from beside the ceremonial fire, leaving the gourd with water and the leaf with *chilate*. The Burier took the clothes of the girl and a stick. He put some of the *chilate* within the leaves of the body bundle but left the greater portion with the water at the spot where the child died as
[775] food for the spirit which they believe returns to the house for three days after death. During this period, it always makes noise and has been known to molest the household.

The Burier and the apprentice set forth with the corpse, food, and personal effects of the dead. On the way to the place where the body was to be left, wherever a path crossed
[775] the main trail, sticks were cut to bar the possibility of the spirit wandering from the road when going from the resting place of the body to the home. The procession went to a thicket about 500 yards from the dwelling. Here a pretense was made to bury the bundle, the earth and stones being lightly put aside so that a shallow depression remained at the roots of the thorny bushes.

[777] [184] On the Pacific side, cemeteries have been

blessed by the Roman Catholic priest, and the dead are buried in the earth shortly after life ceases. The medicine man and the Burier are the only persons to touch the body, however. The preparations, including a funeral feast and the blocking of cross roads on the main trail, are carried out by both Bribri and Cabécar with much of the detail noted in Talamanca. A plank of wood under the body, chiefly in Ujarrás, or the body wrapped in *bijagua* leaves or a cloth were the usual procedures on the Pacific side before placing the dead in the grave. The writer was present, however, at Cabagra in 1956 when a coffin was used for the first time. The school gave the planks and nails and lent the hammer for its manufacture. A description of this death and burial follows.

As soon as the woman died, a rope wick was lighted by the body. Everything immediately around the deceased, such as her bed which was made of cane poles and a reed mattress, a sack which was over the bed and upon which she lay, were removed by the Burier. On this occasion there were three Buriers and one apprentice. The bed and mattress were thrown over a cliff, and the sack was used to line the coffin. The corpse was wrapped in a cheap cotton blanket by the Buriers and put in the coffin. The best dress of the departed, one of blue cotton cloth with yellow dots, was placed on top of the wrapped body and the planks for the cover were nailed on.

During this whole procedure, the family disappeared and none of the stand-bys would look at what was happening. When the coffin was ready, a girl took branches which had been cut for the purpose and outlined a path stretching from both doors of the house to the main trail. The Buriers then tied the coffin onto a litter with rope. As soon as this was done, the girl went ahead down the trail to the cemetery, blocking any opening in the path with branches. When a river had to be crossed, branches were placed on the rocks and at the shallow edges to mark the way so that the soul could not stray on its journey back to the house from the grave. The Buriers followed with the coffin. One carried a wooden cross, a lighted wick made of *mastate* (*see* Bark Cloth), and an unlighted candle.

At the cemetery, the wick and the candle

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
[P 34(1)] SA19 Talamanca SA19
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Cabecar

764 were placed at one end of the spot where the grave was to be dug in such a manner that when the wick burned out the candle lighted. At the other end, the cross was put up. When the hole was ready, the coffin was lowered and covered with dirt. Then everyone returned to their respective houses except the few people who had been near the woman at death or had accidentally touched anything near her after she died. In this case, there were only the Buriers, the apprentice, and one man.

[783] [756] These persons were considered unclean and had to be purified. The medicine man, who was also a Burier but had not assisted at the death, took over. First, he had them bathe in the river, and then, before entering the house, he put hot water in cups made of *bijagua* leaves and poured it over their hands and arms up to their elbows. Inside, chocolate, yuca, and maize were left in gourds for the soul to eat when it returned in the night, and there it stayed for nine days. A feast was prepared for the ninth day and the motions of saying the rosary were carried out as no one really knew the entire prayer.

● [775]

[765] [777]

765 On the tenth day, the *seté ɨuwɔk* ceremony was observed. Fire was lighted with a stone and *cabuya* (*see* Fibers) wick. This was taken to the cemetery. Among the Talamancan Bribri there is a similar ritual, but the fire must be of cacao wood. Then four cacao beans, four grains of white maize, four *ayote* (pumpkin) seeds, four roosters (because the dead was female, chickens are for the males), and four gourds of chicha were placed in the house for the departed soul. The number is important as *sibu* (*see* Theological Beliefs) is supposed to have put four of everything in the world. The task of the Singer was performed by the medicine man and the Buriers, four in all. The history of the deceased was chanted: how she looked; what she did; how she played and planted; where she went on vacations or trips; what she bought and had; in truth, everything pertaining to her life. During this chant the medicine man and the Burier remained apart on two benches placed at the west. This ceremony began at 3:00 P.M. and ended at 11:00 P.M. with a feast of yuca, *tiquizque*, meat, chocolate, and chicha.

[825] [801] [767] [533]

Funeral and Bone Burial. Attention has already been called to the custom of burying the bones

[P.47(B)] SA19 Talamanca SA19 Cabécar Bribri Terraba

784 825 [779] [224] tion are still evident in many tabus pertaining to animals. Among the Cabécares, all animals have a plant name which is used when a hunt is planned. One does not say that he is going to hunt a given creature. He announces that he is going to look for yuca or *tiquízque*, as the case might be. This is to deceive the pro- [776] tector or *dueño* of the animal so that the game will not be warned. Each sickness is associated 753 with a distinct animal and is believed to be 825 sent by *ditegLa*, lord of illness. The toad is [774] associated with a sickness that causes pain in the stomach, loss of weight, coughing, and then death. The first women in the world had [756] this illness. A medicine man passed the toad over them as a cure. It is bad to touch a toad. 784 The *duriwak* clan of the Bribri cannot touch 825 toads nor possums. In fact, the Buriers (*see* 614 Death) are the only persons who can touch 262 buzzards or possums. They are allowed to kill the latter. The *kor'wak* clan of the now extinct [767] *korrebué* or Singers could not eat nor touch [775] tapir because it was the reincarnation of their ancestors. The *sənítsiwa* and *mínúLiwa* not only cannot eat this today, but the *mínúLiwa* must even change their direction if they see tapir tracks. Bribri women and children can only eat this meat if it has first been smoked and then cooked by an old woman. Macaw meat is tabu to women and to men belonging to the Bribri clans of *duriwak*, *saLiwak*, *kor'wak*, *klámbiwak*, *sulariwak*, and *ruLgikwak*. Before other men can consume it, macaw has to be prepared in a special pot and the partakers have to wash their hands.

FOLKLORE

The War between the Cabécares and Terribís

(*Cabécar*)

173 726 *sibu* left *sibuLetá*, the green mountain, in Cabécar. It was the time when people wore only loincloths of *mastate*. Many Terribís (Térrabas) suddenly appeared to kill the

remembered that these people were under the dominance of the Bribri, and according to Cabécar tradition definitely took part and suffered in these raids as the version cited denotes.

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
SA19 Talamanca SA19
[P. 51(1)] Cabecar Bribri

538 773 The "histories" or legends of the Cabécares and Bribri are numerous. By reviewing them we can gather some of their fundamental theology in spite of the influence of Christian missionaries and contacts with non-indigenous cultures. The Indians themselves refer to these stories as histories and do not like the word tale or legend. To them, they are still something sacred and apart and on the whole are known only to the *jawá* or older men. They are recounted to aspirants, and occasionally around the fire during nights of interminable winter rain. It is interesting that histories dealing with subjects such as the soul, the creation of the world, etc., are usually Cabécar by origin although accepted by the Bribri. Secular tales recounting the reason for the appearance or the voice of certain animals are generally Bribri.

776 **Theological Beliefs.** At the root of Talamanca religion, there is one powerful god, *sibu*, who, as Lehmann notes, has at least twenty different names.[100] He is good and is responsible for the good in the world. He is everywhere. When he is with non-Indians he dresses with shoes, etc., but with Indians he does as they do. He speaks all languages and taught people how to do everything.

[773] The role of *sibu* is akin to that of an artist or architect. He thought of man and he made us through *suLá* while he, *sibu*, was thinking of them. The good and bad people all go to *sibu* when they die if their bones have been sung to (*see* Bone Burial). The soul must wait for this, and if they are never sung to, then a snake eats the bones. The souls of Indians and non-Christians go to the world below, nevertheless. This is why *sibu* took everything from beneath the earth to make place for the Indians there. In this underground domain, there are four worlds. One is for sickness; one for the owners (*dueño*) or protectors of animals; one for Indians; one for the evil spirits. Disease is often sent by the spirit owners or protectors of animals or the animals themselves. This is one reason why the medicine man has his own and secret name for them.

775 772 776 753 [756]

771 776 The Talamanca religion on the whole, how-

[100] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 220.

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771 ever, is animistic. Their world is governed by
776 spirits, in spite of the goodness of *sibu*. Many of these are evil; some are bad; and a few are malevolent. At one time or other, most have had connections with *sibu*.

773 According to the Bribri, *sibu*, the great god,
776 had a son, *suLá*, by *sibu amí* (literally, god mother). *suLá* was responsible for teaching the cultivation of plantains and maize and the making of chicha. He also taught the people how to build circular houses (*palenques*). He is credited with placing the Bribri in Talamanca and the Changuinas, Térrabas (Terribís) and Brunkas (Borucas) in their respective locations. Among the Bribri, he is responsible for
[614] the *uniwak* clan whose name signifies clan, "seed or race," of the vessel (pot). The name came about because *suLá* ordered this group to
● [775] go after death underneath a pot (*un*), turned upside down, and thus reach their heaven which is underground.

776 Certain evil spirits are common to the Cabécar and Bribri and dominate their lives. The most important is known in both tongues as *bé* or *ŋą* and in Spanish as the devil. He is able to kill as well as be a maldoer. People believe that he is omnipotent, living in all parts at all times. Another very powerful devil is *bukLú* (*see* Tabus) who seems to be many devils but can be taken as one. People have been carried away and eaten by him. He and the *tǫmí* are guardians of animals. *Lą̀n* or *kiritum* is also a bad devil (*see* Theological Myths: *A Tale of the bukLú*).[1] He can take any form, including the human form, and can be more than one. He makes his home in the air. *kiritum* differs from another "devil" of the Bribri, *kritəbó*, who takes the shape of a dog and walks at night. Another minor group of evil spirits are the *kambra* (*see* Legends: Bribri version of The Sea).[2]

One of the most feared evil spirits is usually called *dínamí* in Cabécar and *díkuŋ* in Bribri, although he is known by other names such as *bák-namí* in Cabécar and *tsirule* in Bribri.[161] He is the same as a bad water spirit named *díkuŋ*, in Bribri, who lives in the sea, enters rivers, and drinks human blood.

Formerly, there was another very evil spirit, *miguchké*. He killed the wife of Thunder and

[1] [see category 116, ¶64. Analyst.]
[2] [see category 116, ¶56. Analyst.]

776 stole his child while Thunder was away in the forest. The bereaved father was furious and called *miguchké*, making a tremendous noise. Thunder fought and killed *miguchké*.

Minor evildoers are the *tɵmí* who are both men and women and can be treated collectively or individually. The *tɵmí* inhabit a mountain called *tabatá* near Cabagra on the Pacific side. At times, one can see their clothes drying in the distance, but upon reaching the spot, there are only four large upright stones. The *tɵmí* [825] take care of all animals. The tapir are their cows and the wild pigs and boars their swine. Reports about them come from hunters who have lost their way tracing game. The *tɵmí* do not like men.

Another bad spirit is *orusula*, an enormous pig whose head *sibu* cut off and kept his blood to teach men to beware of him. He lives in the mud of swamps and lagoons and his foam gives [753] people a rash which kills them.

● 775 There are some important malevolent spirits common to both groups known as the *wimbLu* [774] who are souls of the dead. There is more than one soul per person. One goes to *suLa;* one stays with the bones; and another appears to be the soul that torments the living. If the deceased liked to sing or whistle, his spirit has to do the same and it returns to make itself known to the person who cared most for him in life. It appears on the trail, in the cemetery, [787] makes a noise, and pesters its victim in dreams. [756] A medicine man is needed to rid one of the *wimbLu* (*see* Curing). If he doesn't do this, [753] the person dies.

776 There are also spirit lords of places and fish. None of these are particularly friendly to man.

wikubru lives on Pico Blanco where no one can reach him. His one good deed is to warn when sickness is coming by producing great flames on the summit.

The *ujum* are people who live in the rocks on barren peaks. The Bribri consider them as part of the original population of the earth before man and believe that they are evildoers.

suLéjibí today is the name given to a section of land on the Alta Lari near Lagarto or *toLók*. The Bribri believe that before the birth of the sun, *suLéjibí* was a person. He was lord of the

[192] [141] *di* is "water" and *bak* is "stone" in both languages. Jaguar is *bé* in Bribri and *nawá* in Cabécar.
[142] *See* Linguistic Term: *sibu* (sibu) *tsikimeL* (born).